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REPORT RECEIVED ON SOVIET PRODUCTION
OF ELECTRONIC PUNCH CARD COMPUTERS



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REPORT RECEIVED ON SOVIET PRODUCTION
OF ELECTRONIC PUNCH CARD COMPUTERS

The volume of production of electronic punch card computers for industrial use in the USSR was indicated recently by a Soviet press article which stated that the 100th computer was produced by the Vil'nyus Computing Machine Plant. 1/ This plant is the major Soviet enterprise producing electronic punch card computers. The very low level of production of punch card computing machinery -- similar to that which has been produced in the US for at least 10 years -- has severely limited the processing of statistical data at Soviet industrial enterprises and thus has hindered planning.

The Vil'nyus Computing Machine Plant has been constructed largely during the Seven Year Plan (1959-65). The plant produced its first series of electronic punch card machines, the PR 80, during 1960. Series production of a later development, the EV 80-3, was started in the last half of 1961, and a third machine developed during 1962 is to be placed in series production soon. Little has been published about the characteristics of Soviet punch card computers. The EV 80-3, however, has been compared to an IBM 604 electronic calculator, which is a general-purpose, vacuum tube, punch card digital computer that has been manufactured in the US since 1953. About 3,000 IBM 604 machines had been produced by early 1961. 2/ Production of 100 computers at the Vil'nyus plant during the 2 years while the plant was undergoing construction and organization indicates a probable annual capacity in excess of 200 punch card computers.

Soviet punch card computing machines have been installed primarily in computing centers at Soviet industrial installations but also have been exported to other countries of the Soviet Bloc. Only a few of the actual Soviet installations of such equipment have been mentioned in the Soviet press. For example, it was reported that PR 80 machines were installed at the Rostov Agricultural Machinery Plant and that EV 80-3 machines

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were installed at the Lugansk October Revolution Plant. The low volume of output and the number of punch card computers that have been exported to East Germany, Rumania, and Poland has limited the number of computing installations in the USSR which can be equipped with these machines. Furthermore, it has been reported that the Vil'nyus plant would export at least 50 punch card computers during the current season (presumably 1962). 3/ The relatively large volume of exports in spite of the apparent need in the Soviet economy for such equipment possibly can be explained by the fact that existing computing centers in the USSR are operating below their planned capacity because trained programers and machine operators are not available and because potential users of computing centers have not been made aware of how their enterprises can use available data processing equipment.

If the Vil'nyus Computing Machine Plant succeeds in increasing its output of punch card computers, therefore, the optimum use of such equipment in Soviet industry will still be dependent on the training of customers and capable operating personnel. Moreover, the use of punch card equipment as a preliminary step to the automatic processing of all-union economic data will not be widespread before 1965.

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